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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

NEWS

*"We must open wider the doors of opportunity....
for the good of our country and all our people"*
President Eisenhower

U. S. Department of Agriculture

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There is widespread interest and activity in the Rural Development Program. As many as 27 states have reported long-term rural development type work or plans for special programs. These reports describe the formation of Rural Development Program Committees in some states to provide leadership, special continuing research on problems of small farmers, intensified farm and home unit planning, and county surveys.

At least 10 states are planning pilot Rural Development Programs in 1 to 3 counties each. These counties are now being selected.

WHY TEXAS PICKED CHEROKEE COUNTY: Representatives of agencies servicing agriculture in Texas have selected Cherokee County in the eastern part of the State as the first pilot county. A. C. Magee, Professor of Agricultural Economics, Texas A and M College System, has cited five reasons for the selection of Cherokee:

1. The situation in the county is similar to that in nearby counties.
2. A soil survey was recently completed.
3. Good working relations exist among agricultural agencies in the county.
4. The soil conservation district corresponds with county boundaries.
5. The Farmers Home Administration has an active program there.

About 200 farmers and business leaders in Cherokee County met and agreed to move forward with a Rural Development Program. In reporting the meeting, the county newspaper commented: "Cherokee County's future in agriculture is indeed bright...Plans are to make Cherokee County the showplace for other counties in Texas to watch and follow."

TENNESSEE PICKS THREE COUNTIES: In a meeting, October 20, the Tennessee Rural Development Committee approved three counties for rural development type work. These counties -- Hardin, Macon, and Grainger -- are located respectively in the western, central, and eastern parts of the State so that results will point the way for future work in these three main parts.

This is one of a series of periodic reports on RDP activities by business, local, State, Federal, farm and other leadership, working together. If you have comments on the Rural Development Program or this Newsletter, please address communications to the Office of Information, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, 25, D. C.

MORE STATES ARE MOVING AHEAD: Since the last issue of the News, other states have reported rural development activities.

Mississippi: Dean Clay Lyle writes that the state has had a coordinating council of agencies servicing agriculture for several years. At a meeting October 21 on the Rural Development Program, the group discussed many forms of assistance to small farmers, including part-time employment opportunities, credit, better health facilities, extension, research, and vocational training.

Washington: Director Louis L. Madsen of the Institute of Agricultural Sciences of the State College writes that, "we are very sympathetic and interested" in rural development work. A five-year Extension Service-Experiment Station project, using College and Kellogg Foundation funds, is underway to evaluate the farm and home unit approach and other Extension techniques.

Michigan: Assistant Director Richard W. Bell of the Extension Service reports a meeting October 21 of agencies servicing agriculture to discuss rural development in the State and the possibility of naming a pilot area.

West Virginia: At a meeting of the Rural Development Committee, September 30, a subcommittee recommended criteria for selecting a pilot county:

- (1) Most people in the area should earn most of their income from farming.
- (2) The local people are willing to take part in the program.
- (3) Marketing facilities are available.
- (4) Opportunities exist for vocational training.
- (5) "Land potential" is present.

New Jersey: Associate Director of Extension Lindley G. Cook writes that they have been making a special effort in some counties to get local opinion on long-range needs for Extension work. Many specialists taking part in the study report that 4-H Club work offers the most effective way of aiding farm families with very low incomes. Some local leaders believe the parents can be approached only through the children.

Georgia: Dean Calvin C. Murray of the College of Agriculture describes long-range work in the State: "We are now in the process of doing County Program Projection in 18 counties." Organization is similar to that suggested for the Rural Development Program: a State committee and a local committee in each county. "If the proper job is done in these counties, essentially the same results will be obtained as is outlined in the Rural Development Program."

KENTUCKY PLANS RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A program for rural development in Kentucky would require a State-wide or overall approach to the problem and an area approach in those areas of similar conditions. The proposal was prepared for the Kentucky Rural Development Committee by Earl Mayhew of the Experiment Station.

The plan describes different kinds of low-income farming in the State and includes colored maps showing counties where small farms are concentrated. It is pointed out that the full resources of Extension, the College

of Agriculture, and the Experiment Station should be brought to bear in the leadership and development of a program.

"The cooperation of other agencies having something to offer for the curing of underemployment and the lack of purchasing power and for the improvement of rural life and rural life opportunities should be utilized to the maximum possible extent." Other governmental departments as well as business and civic organizations have contributions to make, along with agricultural agencies. The Extension Service would furnish leadership for inaugurating the program.

Some research is needed at once on small farm enterprises and techniques to use in rural development. The draft plan cites research subjects, including resource factors versus human factors as causes of underemployment, the most effective methods to use in the program, and relationships among agencies.

AN OHIO COUNTY TAKES THE INITIATIVE: Ohio's Monroe County, in the southeastern part of the State, is beginning rural development at the grass roots. County leaders have started to gather facts on agriculture, industry, and health and to speed up economic progress. Finding that 4,000 workers are available for jobs, the county industry committee issued a report, "What Monroe County Offers." It is an invitation to business firms to move in. Extension Agent Howard Phillips says the county will succeed in this program because, "people, not land or fine livestock or big bank accounts, are the basic resource."

USDA AGENCIES MEET ON PILOT COUNTY SERVICES: At a meeting October 10 of the USDA Rural Development Committee, agency heads discussed with Under Secretary True D. Morse the help they can give in pilot county work using present resources. The discussion centered on FHA credit; consulting on rural development research; promotion of small industry through credit for electrification; small forest management; advice in setting up woodworking industries; soil surveys and advice on soil use; and information services.

A working aid listing services available for pilot areas through the USDA and other Federal Departments is being prepared for state Rural Development Committees and other state leaders heading up work with pilot counties.

At this meeting, agency heads also named representatives of their agencies who will be responsible for Rural Development Program activities. They are:

Dr. Sherman Johnson, Agricultural Research Service
Robert A. Ragains, Farmers Home Administration
Dr. Margaret Hagood, Agricultural Marketing Service
Robert D. Partridge, Rural Electrification Administration
Dr. Charles E. Kellogg, Soil Conservation Service
Charles A. Sheffield, Federal Extension Service
William S. Swingler, Forest Service
Russell C. Engberg, Farm Credit Administration
Joe Doherty, USDA Office of Information

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS FAMILY FARM NEEDS: The economic problems of many small farm families "warrant the attention of the entire Nation," a Special House Subcommittee on Family Farms recently reported in a statement issued at the close of a 1,500-mile trip through the South.

The Subcommittee held hearings in Texas, Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee, during which farmers, farm organization leaders, and agricultural agency representatives testified. The Subcommittee stated that "positive action is required to accommodate the needs of the family-operated farm and to protect and promote the family farm as the continuing basic unit of American agriculture."

Additional hearings will be held as part of a comprehensive study of family farming. The reports should help push forward the whole Rural Development Program.

COMING MEETINGS: The Adult Education Association will sponsor a conference on rural and urban community development in St. Louis, November 11 to 13. Social scientists, community leaders, and Extension agents will discuss the impact of adult education on community growth. If you want more information, write the AEA, 1201 16th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

The 13th annual Professional Agricultural Workers Conference at Tuskegee Institute, November 13 to 15 will concentrate on rural development problems and techniques.

The annual East Tennessee awards banquet will take place December 3 in Knoxville to honor outstanding communities in the community improvement program.

"The Rural Development Program will take the time and cooperation of many citizens. The end results will be satisfactory when there is cooperation between business leaders, farm leaders, civic leaders, and educational leaders looking toward a complete solution of the community problem." --- Farm and Home Administrator R. B. McLeaish.

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